

Up to the latest challenge

A person who describes herself as “always looking for another challenge” has found one after another as a member of the team at HCA Public Health’s Communicable Disease Control and Epidemiology.

Debbie Chitty, PHN, joined the Health Care Agency in 1990 after five years in a variety of nursing challenges. However, nursing was not her first field of study. “I was a music major in college but I soon came to the conclusion that it would be hard to make a living with music. I didn’t like to teach large groups and was much better one-on-one. I also enjoyed science and looked around for something I would like that would match my interest and skills. All of this pointed toward nursing as a profession and I really don’t know what I would be if I wasn’t a nurse,” stated Debbie.

She received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from San Diego’s Point Loma College in 1985 and started her career caring for patients on an orthopedics and urology unit at Long Beach Memorial Medical Center. “Because the hospital was a designated

trauma center, we saw a wide variety of patients and I gained a breadth of experience,” Debbie recalled. Later, she served as an operating room nurse at Whittier Presbyterian Hospital and as a physician office and private scrub nurse with the House Ear Clinic. However, the need for a challenge soon provided a new path.

While in nursing school, she had the opportunity to meet someone from a public health department and thought it would be an interesting field. A chance browsing of ads in a nursing publication revealed an opportunity with HCA, and Debbie started with the Agency during a major measles outbreak. Communicable Disease Control and Epidemiology Medical Director Dr. Hildy Meyers says Debbie was up to the challenge presented by that outbreak. “Debbie very rapidly became an expert on measles and subsequently mastered many other critical areas in Epidemiology, quickly



developing into a key member of the staff,” said Dr. Meyers. Debbie says versatility is a key to what she does. “Since coming to HCA, I’ve worked in the Hepatitis B Perinatal Prevention program, in childhood lead prevention and with nursing homes to develop effective infection control programs,” Debbie said. Now, her responsibilities include working closely with Public Health Field Nurses on referrals related to specific communicable disease reports and serving as a resource to public and private agencies as well as the general public on matters related to communicable diseases.

The variety of Debbie’s job is one of the things she enjoys most. “There is always a challenge, which means there’s always something new to learn.” She pointed to emerging diseases and the growing problem of multiple drug resistant organisms as some of the current challenges. “We in epidemiology are sometimes called ‘disease detectives’ because there are a lot of skills that go into trying to solve a mystery illness. It’s not only what to ask but how to ask

County service celebrated

The May Employee Recognition Ceremony found Deputy Agency Director/Medical and Institutional Health Services Herb Rosenzweig “pinch hitting” for HCA Director Julie Poulson to serve as Master of Ceremonies for the event held at the County Hall of Administration.

Service awards were presented to 28 employees who have completed 285 years of service to the county. Honorees included Employee Health Services Office Supervisor Mary Hill, who is marking her 25th year of county service.

Twenty year recipients attending were Laura Cole, a licensed



Receiving their 20 year Service Award Certificates are (left to right) Chongge Vang, David Poeung, and Laura Cole with Deputy Agency Director Herb Rosenzweig

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Pet Faire boosts adoptions

Any way you measure it, Animal Care Services' Pet Faire 2001 was a tremendous success, resulting in the adoption of 92 animals. Visitors to Pet Faire not only braved gray skies and drizzle but lines at the adoption windows to complete the process of taking a new pet home. The 60 cats and 32 dogs adopted on May 12th represented an 88% increase in adoptions over an "Adopt-A-Pet" day held last year.

Pet Faire visitors also had a chance to learn more about pets and pet care through numerous information booths. There was information on pet nutrition, animal first aid, pet products and even exotic pets like snakes, iguanas and turtles. Working animals including the Sheriff's Department K-9 and Bloodhound units provided demonstrations and children had an opportunity to win prizes by spinning the "Squeal of Fortune." Sorry, Vanna White was not in attendance!

Special events like the Pet Faire provide great exposure for Orange County Animal Care Services and the wonderful animals available for adoption. If you are considering a family pet, remember Animal Care Services and check out their Adopt-A-Pet website at www.ocpetinfo.com.



The "Squeal of Fortune" was a big hit with kids at Pet Faire 2001.

Roll up your sleeves and save lives

There's just a few days left to schedule your appointment for Orange County's Summer Blood Drive and this year there's a location convenient for almost everyone. The following is a list of sites including dates and contact persons for this year's blood drive, so schedule your appointment with the site of your choice. There will also be several drives held at Social Services Agency locations across the county, with those dates and times to be announced later. In general, you must be healthy, at least 17 years of age and weigh at least 110 pounds to be eligible to donate blood. According to the American Red Cross, only five percent of eligible donors give blood even though the process is very safe and takes only about an hour. If you have any questions about the Summer Blood Drive, please call Sylvia Valles in Volunteer Services at 834-3874.

EMS bids Program Manager farewell



HCA's loss is Idaho's gain, as Emergency Medical Services Program Manager CeCe Waite retired May 31 to begin her retirement in the Great Northwest. Prior to joining HCA in 1996, Mrs. Waite worked for many years at Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian, serving in a variety of roles including Prehospital Care Coordinator. HCA Director Julie Poulson, Deputy Agency Director/Medical & Institutional Health Services Herb Rosenzweig and EMS Medical Director Dr. Bruce Haynes were among those on hand at a retirement party to wish CeCe farewell. She also received a certificate of recognition from the Orange County Board of Supervisors and special recognition awards from representatives of Orange County's Fire Departments. Many of CeCe's current and former co-workers shared stories of her dedication, accomplishments and sense of humor. Pictured above, CeCe's husband, Nick, shows off one of the gifts presented.

Date	Place	Contact
n July 9 th & 16 th	Health Care Agency 405 W. 5 th St., Santa Ana	Sylvia Valles (714) 834-3874
n July 10	County Operations Center 1330 S. Grand, Bldg. B, Santa Ana	
n July 12	O.C. Superior Court Lamoreaux Justice Center 341 The City Drive, Orange	Beverly Helmick (714) 935-8398
	O.C. Superior Court North Justice Center 1275 N. Berkeley, Fullerton	Tammie Phillips (714) 773-4536
n July 13	O.C. Superior Court Harbor Justice Center, Laguna Niguel	Edward Rowan (949) 707-3637
	O.C. Superior Court Harbor Justice Center, Laguna Hills	Cheryl Smith (714) 245-6053
n July 19	Health Care Agency 1725 W. 17 th St., Santa Ana	Patti LaPorte (714) 834-8008
n July 24	Hall of Administration 10 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana	Amber Hannigan (714) 834-4144
n July 25	O.C. Superior Court West Justice Center 8141 13 th St., Westminster	Elena Verdugo (714) 896-7855
n July 26	O.C. Superior Court Harbor Justice Center, Newport Beach	Richard Augustine (949) 476-4792
n July 27	O.C. Superior Court Central Justice Center 700 Civic Center Dr., Santa Ana	Karlee Hughes (714) 834-4306

Homeless helped by BHS program

There are many different reasons people become homeless. Sometimes, it is the result of the loss of a job. For others, mental illness is a significant factor. HCA Behavioral Health Services seeks to help those homeless individuals with mental illness through the AB 2034 Outreach Program.

The AB 2034 program reaches the homeless or those at risk of homelessness to provide support services including housing, meals, vocational services, job placement and mental health services. Critical to the success of the program are the collaborative relationships established with law enforcement agencies in Anaheim, Fullerton, Costa Mesa, Garden Grove, Westminster, Santa Ana and the Orange County Sheriff's Department. Mental health staff members participate in ride-along with community patrol officers, who often have the greatest contact with homeless mentally ill adults



The assistance of law enforcement is essential to the AB 2034 Outreach Program.

in the community.

Other referrals for the AB 2034 program come from correctional facilities, acute psychiatric facilities and community organizations. The program seeks to inform the public about its outreach efforts, participating in events like the Community Organizations and Public Services (C.O.P.S) Expo held June 2nd and 3rd at the Mall of Orange.

Medical miracles remembered

More than 100 people gathered at the UCI Medical Center Auditorium May 25th for the annual Emergency Medical Services Week Celebration sponsored by the Health Care Agency.

Among those in attendance was Board of Supervisors Chair Cynthia Coad, who presented a proclamation designating May 20-26 as Emergency Medical Services Week in Orange County. The day was also special for dozens of paramedics, ambulance company representatives and police officers recognized for their life saving efforts in the past year.

The spotlight belonged to two young men who placed a human face on emergency medical services efforts in Orange County. The first was 13-year-old Trevor Schulte, who survived life-threatening head injuries when his bicycle was struck by a car in Huntington Beach. Surrounding Trevor were the paramedics and trauma center personnel who provided life-saving care and were credited with his astonishing recovery. Spoken like a true teenager, Trevor told the audience he never thought he'd be receiving an award for getting hit by a car!

The second spotlight was on four-year-old Samuel DeLaRosa, who called 911 to summon assistance when his mother, Kelley, became unconscious due to a rapid heartbeat. In the process, he saved not only his mother but his unborn brother, Max.



Four year old Samuel DeLaRosa was a life-saver for his mom, Kelley, and his unborn brother Max.

OC Fair fun for all

So you haven't signed up to work at the HCA exhibit at the Orange County Fair July 13th-29th? You wouldn't want to miss out on all of the fun, would you?

Building on the successes of previous years, an HCA committee has been planning a better-than-ever display for this year's Orange County Fair and your help is needed! HCA staff members are needed to work the booth on a voluntary basis with shifts ranging from three to four hours in length. Volunteers will need their immediate supervisor's approval (at least seven days in advance) and will need to work during their regular work schedule or flex their schedule to accommodate the time spent working at the Fair. Overtime pay is not allowed for working at the Fair. All employees working the booth will receive free admission to the Fair and free parking.

Health Promotion Division Manager Amy Dale says a few more volunteers are needed to fill those last, harder-to-fill shifts. "Because we schedule on a first come, first served basis, many of the most convenient shifts have been filled. The booth has to be staffed from the opening of the fair to its closing each day, so we hope everyone will consider the important contribution they can make to the interactive and educational activities planned for our display," Amy said.

To sign up for the Fair, contact the representative for your service area. They are:

Public Health	Delia Baldi	834-2228
Behavioral Health	June Armstrong	796-0188
Environmental Health	Jennifer Whittington	667-3794
Animal Care Services	Kathy Francis	935-6301
Medical & Institutional Health ..	Alice Gonzales	834-6248
Administration	Vera Nicholson	834-5423

All volunteers will need to attend a training session in July to prepare for staffing the exhibit and to pick-up admission and parking passes.

July Health Observances

Fireworks Safety Month

National Eye Safety Awareness Week July 1-5

National Staff Development Week July 2-9

Gold Star

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someone for information and nursing has a nice perspective because historically, we look at the whole person." Debbie's former supervisor, Cecile Truong, cited another recent case as an example of Debbie's skills. "In a recent situation involving pertussis, Debbie worked independently to coordinate with the hospital and follow-up with patients and staff to ensure evaluation, testing and treatment," recalled Cecile.

Orange County's diversity and location present unique challenges. Some cultures do not emphasize preventive care and the availability of intercontinental travel makes it possible for diseases not common in the U.S. to make a sudden appearance here. "In the United States, we have a good idea of what people can be routinely exposed to but that's not as true with international travel, since many diseases have similar symptoms." While Orange County's diversity is well known, our health is a common concern. "We are here to serve all of the people of Orange County. Disease affects people of all ages, incomes and ethnicities."

While she does not have as much public contact as in the past, Debbie often fields unique and challenging questions from callers. "People call in with a lot of 'What should I do?' questions regarding communicable disease. Sometimes, it has to do with the best way to clean something, or questions related to day care. We even had someone call in about their neighbor spitting in their yard. Many times, the questions require some research because they are not topics for which you can just pull out a book and find the answer. However, we do our best to find an answer for each person."

Debbie credits the support of her colleagues for surviving in this challenging environment. "They have taught me so much, even the new staff members who bring new ways of looking at a situation." Her co-workers say Debbie's knowledge and dependability are key qualities. "I know I can rely on Debbie to get the job done, do it well and bring some humor into the work we do," concluded Dr. Meyers.

Open House Serves Up MultiCultural Buffet of Food and Services

Cultural Competency & Multiethnic Services held their annual Open House on April 19. The many guests were eager to consume the variety of cultural foods and were just as eager to peruse and discuss the many services that Department has to offer.

These services include a cultural lending library of books, audio tapes, videotapes and current articles. Cultural Competency provides training, assistance and consultation for the Health Care Agency. Please stop by anytime and make sure you join us at our next open house! A special thanks for all who came by and made this special event successful.

Statewide acclaim for EHS effort

The efforts of HCA Environmental Health's Used Oil Recycling Program have been recognized by two Sacramento-based organizations with a pair of special awards.

The Sacramento Public Relations Association honored the Used Oil Recycling Program for an interactive CD-Rom, which is featured on the County web site. The site provides an innovative and fun way to provide public information on the proper handling and disposal of used oil.

A second award from the Sacramento Advertising Club recognized the program for efforts to inform boat owners in Dana Point Harbor about the need to prevent discharges of oil contaminated water into the ocean. Through the Oil Bilge Exchange Program, boaters receive free bilge pads and have access to convenient collection sites for disposal of used bilge pads.



Steve Kim, James Hendron and Pearl Boelter accepted two awards on behalf of Environmental Health's Used Oil Program.

HCA Environmental Health has received grants to provide used oil collection centers in Brea, Dana Point, Laguna Hills, Laguna Niguel, Newport Beach, Rancho Santa Margarita, San Clemente, San Juan Capistrano, Stanton, Tustin, Villa Park, Westminster, Yorba Linda and in unincorporated areas of the county. There are 51 used oil recycling centers located in these participating communities.

Service Awards

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clinical social worker with Behavioral Health Older Adult Services; David Poeung, a community health assistant with Multi-Ethnic Health Education Services; and Chongee Vang, a social worker assistant in Multi-Ethnic Health Education Services.

we're on-line!

You can check out the latest issues of the Health Care Agency's newsletters by using this URL:

<http://www.oc.ca.gov/hca/newslett.htm>

We will keep current issues on line for a year.
Let us know how you like the convenience!

Special service awards were presented to individuals involved in Operation Heartbeat, a program to provide CPR training to county employees and to place an automated external defibrillator at the Hall of Administration. Among those in attendance were Mary Jo Vincent, RN and Barbra Andrade, RN of Emergency Medical Services. Mr. Rosenzweig was also recognized for the direction and leadership both he and his programs provided to help make Operation Heartbeat a success.

WHAT'S UP

What's UP is a newsletter for employees of the County of Orange, CA, Health Care Agency.

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Your Input

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